



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2022-0804; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00081-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, and AS332L1 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by review of maintenance instructions that showed conflicting methods of recording torque cycles for certain parts. This proposed AD would require recalculating the torque cycles of certain parts, updating log cards, and replacing those parts before exceeding their recalculated service life limits (life limits); removing certain other parts from service; and applying an operational restriction on certain parts, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For EASA material that is proposed for IBR in this NPRM, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. The EASA material is also available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0804.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0804; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the EASA AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2022-0804; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00081-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the

proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2022-0012, dated January 24, 2022 (EASA AD 2022-0012), to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters (AH), formerly Eurocopter, Eurocopter France, Aerospatiale, Model AS 332 C, AS 332 C1, AS 332 L, and AS 332 L1 helicopters.

This proposed AD was prompted by review of maintenance instructions that showed conflicting methods of recording torque cycles for certain parts. The FAA is proposing this AD to address under-calculated torque cycle accumulations and prevent a part from remaining in service beyond its fatigue life. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in failure of a part and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. See EASA AD 2022-0012 for additional background information.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2022-0012 requires recalculating the torque cycles of certain affected parts, updating log cards, and replacing those parts before exceeding their recalculated service life limits. EASA AD 2022-0012 also requires removing certain other affected parts from service and prohibits installing those parts. Lastly, EASA AD 2022-0012 applies an operational restriction to certain affected parts.

The FAA reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. AS332-01.00.76, Revision 1, dated March 8, 2022 (ASB AS332-01.00.76, Rev 1). This service information specifies procedures for determining the corrected accumulated torque cycles and updating the log cards for certain parts, new life limits expressed in torque cycles, and new procedures for counting torque cycles.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is proposing this AD after evaluating all known relevant information and determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of these same type designs.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2022-0012, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any

differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD and except as discussed under “Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD.”

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA’s ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2022-0012 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2022-0012 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2022-0012 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2022-0012. Service information referenced in EASA AD 2022-0012 for compliance will be available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0804 after the FAA final rule is published.

ADs Mandating Airworthiness Limitations

The FAA has previously mandated airworthiness limitations by mandating each airworthiness limitation task (e.g., inspections and replacements (life limits)) as an AD requirement or issuing ADs that require revising the airworthiness limitations section (ALS) of the existing maintenance manual or instructions for continued airworthiness to incorporate new or revised inspections and life limits. This proposed AD, however, would require operators to incorporate into maintenance records required by 14 CFR 91.417(a)(2) or 135.439(a)(2), as applicable for your helicopter, the requirements (airworthiness limitations) specified in service information required by a CAA AD. The FAA does not intend this as a substantive change. For these ADs, the ALS requirements for operators are the same but are complied with differently. Requiring the incorporation of the new ALS requirements into the maintenance records, rather than requiring

individual ALS tasks (e.g., repetitive inspections and replacements), requires operators to record AD compliance once after updating the maintenance records, rather than after every time the ALS task is completed.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

EASA AD 2022-0012 allows using Airbus Helicopters ASB No. AS332-01.00.76, Revision 0, dated December 16, 2021, for corrective actions; whereas this proposed AD would not and would instead require using ASB AS332-01.00.76, Rev 1. EASA AD 2022-0012 requires replacing each affected part before exceeding its re-calculated life limit; whereas this proposed AD would require, within 30 days after the effective date of the AD, incorporating the re-calculated life limits into maintenance records required by 14 CFR 91.417(a)(2) or 135.439(a)(2), as applicable for your helicopter.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 7 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD.

Recalculating the torque cycles and updating maintenance records would take about 4 work-hours for an estimated cost of about \$340 per helicopter and \$2,380 for the U.S. fleet. Incorporating actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits and maintenance tasks, into maintenance records, would require about 2 work-hours for a cost of \$170 per helicopter and a cost of \$1,190 for the U.S. fleet. Replacing a main rotor shaft would take about 40 work-hours and parts would cost about \$175,684 for an estimated cost of \$179,084. Replacing a main gearbox flexible mounting plate support would take about 80 work-hours and parts would cost about \$57,457 for an estimated cost of \$64,257.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters: Docket No. FAA-2022-0804; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-00081-R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, and AS332L1 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 1400, Miscellaneous Hardware.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by review of maintenance instructions that showed conflicting methods of recording torque cycles for certain parts. The FAA is issuing this AD to address under-calculated torque cycle accumulations and prevent a part from remaining in service beyond its fatigue life. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in failure of a part and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2022-0012, dated January 24, 2022 (EASA AD 2022-0012).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2022-0012

(1) Where EASA AD 2022-0012 defines “the ASB” as “AH Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) AS332-01.00.76,” for this AD replace that definition with “Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS332-01.00.76, Revision 1, dated March 8, 2022.”

(2) Where EASA AD 2022-0012 references flight hours (FH) and the service information referenced in EASA AD 2022-0012 specifies life limit thresholds in terms of FH, this AD requires using total hours time-in-service.

(3) Where EASA AD 2022-0012 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(4) This AD does not mandate paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2022-0012; instead, for this AD, within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, incorporate into maintenance records required by 14 CFR 91.417(a)(2) or 135.439(a)(2), as applicable for your helicopter, the actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits and maintenance tasks, specified in the Appendix, section 4., of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS332-01.00.76, Revision 1, dated March 8, 2022. After the action required by this paragraph has been done, no alternative actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits, may be used unless the actions or intervals are approved as an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (k)(1) of this AD.

(5) This AD does not mandate compliance with the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2022-0012.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2022-0012 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Special Flight Permit

Special flight permits are prohibited.

(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (l)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(l) Related Information

(1) For EASA AD 2022-0012, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0804.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

(3) For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this AD, contact

Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

Issued on June 23, 2022.

Christina Underwood, Acting Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2022-13825 Filed: 6/28/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 6/29/2022]